



**Morning Alert - Wednesday, August 9, 2017**

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK, NTV, and TBS led with reports that Typhoon Noru has been downgraded to a tropical storm. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that new Okinawa Affairs Minister Esaki said at a press briefing on Tuesday that the SOFA “should be slightly revised,” contrary to the GOJ’s official position. Fuji TV led with a report that an extraordinary session of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly began on Tuesday, saying it is the first session since supporters of Tokyo Governor Koike won by a landslide in the July election.

Top stories in national dailies included a report on past visits to sites of WWII battles by the Emperor and the Empress (Asahi); National Cancer Center Japan data showing the survival rates of cancer patients at 188 hospitals (Mainichi); National Cancer Center Japan data showing that hospitals tend not to aggressively treat cancer patients aged 85 or older (Yomiuri); a plan by an auditor to Toshiba to grant a qualified approval of its earnings report for the fiscal year that ended in March ([Nikkei](#)); and a lack of enthusiasm in South Korea for the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in 2018 (Sankei).

## SECURITY

### Okinawa minister says SOFA “should be slightly revised”

All papers wrote that Okinawa Affairs Minister Esaki said at a regular press briefing on Tuesday that the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) should be “should be slightly revised.” Esaki, however, did not elaborate, saying that he is a “layman” on the issue. The papers wrote that it is unusual for a cabinet minister to refer to the possibility of revising the agreement because the GOJ does not take such a position. The minister reportedly said that he hopes that negotiations with the

U.S. will be carried out with the aim of changing what needs to be changed and that the GOJ should tell the U.S. whatever it needs to in order to address the feelings of the people of Okinawa even if it takes time.

Later in the day Esaki defended his remarks, saying that they were in line with the policy of the Abe administration, which has revised the accord by concluding supplementary agreements and seeks tangible improvements in the SOFA. He was asked by Okinawa Governor Onaga during a meeting at the governor's office to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa, including drastic revision of the SOFA, but did not comment on the agreement.

### **Japan cites growing North Korean threat in defense white paper**

All papers reported on Japan's Defense White Paper for 2017, which Defense Minister Onodera presented to the cabinet on Tuesday. The document says that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have reached "a new level of threat" to Japan and the international community. The level of concern about the threat posed by North Korea was upgraded from last year. The annual defense paper also expresses strong concern over China's maritime assertiveness in the East and South China Seas and its impact on the security of Japan and the global community.

Yomiuri wrote that China expressed strong displeasure with Japan's defense paper, with a Chinese defense ministry spokesman saying that the document includes malicious statements. South Korea also lodged a protest over the white paper for its reiteration of Japan's claim to the Takeshima Islands, known as Dokdo in South Korea.

### **Onodera appoints three experts as policy advisors**

Asahi and Nikkei wrote that Defense Minister Onodera has appointed former Defense Minister Satoshi Morimoto, former Chief of Staff of Joint Staff Ryouichi Oriki, and former Vice Defense Minister Masanori Nishi as his policy advisors.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **North Korea conspicuous in its isolation at ASEAN meetings**

Asahi wrote that the recent ASEAN meetings threw in stark relief the deepening isolation of North Korea. The ASEAN Regional Forum issued a chairman's statement expressing grave concern about North Korea, and only three of the participants in the conference held bilateral meetings with a North Korean representative. Noting that Secretary of State Tillerson urged his ASEAN counterparts to implement the new UNSC sanctions resolution on North Korea and reduce their diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, the paper wrote that the U.S.-led pressure on the DPRK has been successful.

### **LDP's Komura to visit Iran**

Yomiuri wrote that LDP Vice President Komura has decided to visit Iran in early September for talks with President Rouhani as a special envoy of Prime Minister Abe. The paper conjectured that the

senior LDP official will discuss Iran's implementation of its nuclear agreement with the U.S. and Europe at his meeting with the president.

### **ROK court orders Mitsubishi to pay forced laborers compensation**

All Tuesday evening papers reported on the order handed down to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries by a district court in Gwangju Province in South Korea to pay a total of around 123.2 million won to a woman and a family member of another woman as compensation for being subjected to forced labor in Nagoya during WWII. Several district courts have made decisions favoring WWII forced workers following the Supreme Court's ruling in 2012 that although the issue of compensation was settled by Japan and South Korea with their 1965 agreement, the right of individuals to seek withheld wages and compensation was not revoked.

## **POLITICS**

### **Ruling coalition eyes extraordinary Diet session in late September**

Mainichi wrote that it has learned from a senior LDP official that the ruling coalition is making arrangements to convene an extraordinary Diet session in the week starting Sept. 25. The ruling parties will reject the opposition camp's request to convene the session earlier due to Prime Minister Abe's plans to visit Russia and New York in September. The paper speculated that bills on work-style reform and legalizing casinos will top the agenda for deliberations in the next Diet session.

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